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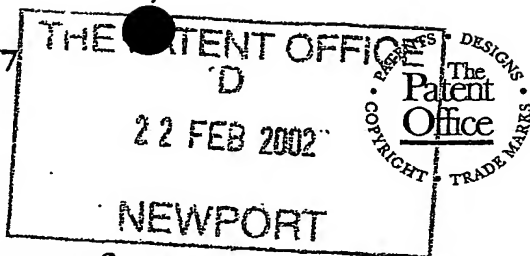
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Ansower

Dated 11 March 2003



22FEB02 E698021-3 D02819
P01/7700 0.00-0204134.1

1/77

Request for grant of a patent

(See the notes on the back of this form. You can also get an explanatory leaflet from the Patent Office to help you fill in this form)

The Patent Office

Cardiff Road
Newport
South Wales
NP10 8QQ

1. Your reference

899/S

2. Patent application number

(The Patent Office will fill in this part)

0204134.1

3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant (*underline all surnames*)

Sweetspot U.K. Limited
Unit 3, Highlands Farm
Berden
Nr. Bishops Stortford
Herts, CM23 1AB

Patents ADP number (*if you know it*)

If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation

UK 8330169001

4. Title of the invention

Sports Shoe Cover

5. Name of your agent (*if you have one*)

Keith W Nash & Co

"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent (*including the postcode*)

90-92 Regent Street
Cambridge
CB2 1DP

Patents ADP number (*if you know it*)

1206001

6. If you are declaring priority from one or more earlier patent applications, give the country and the date of filing of the or of each of these earlier applications and (*if you know it*) the or each application number

Country

Priority application number
(*if you know it*)

Date of filing
(*day / month / year*)

7. If this application is divided or otherwise derived from an earlier UK application, give the number and the filing date of the earlier application

Number of earlier application

Date of filing
(*day / month / year*)

8. Is a statement of inventorship and of right to grant of a patent required in support of this request? (*Answer 'Yes' if:*

- a) any applicant named in part 3 is not an inventor, or
 - b) there is an inventor who is not named as an applicant, or
 - c) any named applicant is a corporate body.
- See note (d))

Patents Form 1/77

9. Enter the number of sheets for any of the following items you are filing with this form. Do not count copies of the same document

Continuation sheets of this form

Description 5

Claim(s) 0

Abstract 0

Drawing(s) 3

8

27

10. If you are also filing any of the following, state how many against each item.

Priority documents

Translations of priority documents

Statement of inventorship and right to grant of a patent (Patents Form 7/77)

Request for preliminary examination and search (Patents Form 9/77)

Request for substantive examination (Patents Form 10/77)

Any other documents (please specify)

11. I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

Signature Keith W Nash & Co Date
Keith W Nash & Co, Agents

12. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom David L Roberts - 01223 355477

Warning

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Notes

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C899.00/S

TITLE: SPORTS SHOE COVER

Field of the invention

This invention related to a cover for a lace-up sports shoe, and to a sports shoe when fitted with such a cover. For the purposes of the present specification the term "sports shoe" refers to any item of footwear, including a boot.

Background to the invention

A sports shoe such as a football boot is typically held on the wearer's foot by means of laces which, when in use, are tensioned to draw the upper of the shoe against the foot. Where the shoe is for use in a sport that involves kicking the ball, the laces can become untied, and this can be hazardous for the wearer who may trip on the trailing ends of the untied laces. In addition, such shoes are prone to wear, which can be a problem as the shoes are often very expensive to replace.

US 6038792 shows a soccer shoe cover which includes a rubber membrane that is stretched over the whole of the shoe upper and held in position by fastenable straps. Although the cover overlays the laces of the shoe, fitting the cover to the shoe can be a cumbersome process in view of the need securely to fasten the straps.

Summary of the invention

According to invention, there is provided a cover for a lace-up sports shoe, a cover comprising of continuous, elastically expandable sleeve for stretching around the shoe, so that the shoe extends through the sleeve with the toe of the shoe protruding from the end of sleeve, the sleeve also covering shoe laces to prevent the latter from untying.

The cover can be fitted to the shoe simply by passing it over the toe end and sliding it along the shoe until it is in the correct position. When so positioned, the elasticity of the cover will hold it in position. Thus, the cover can be relatively easily fitted (and removed) from the shoe.

Preferably, the sleeve is of a varying axial dimension around its circumference, with the top of the sleeve being longer than the sleeve bottom.

Then the top of the sleeve is so proportioned that, in use, it extends over the laces, the sleeve can properly cover the laces, whilst the bottom portion can extend just around the portion of the shoe sole in the region of the arch of foot so that it does not interfere with or snag on any formations, such as studs, on the heel or toe portion of the sole.

Preferably, the exterior of the top of the sleeve includes a zone the surface of which is rough, wherein when a ball is being kicked using the shoe with the cover fitted, the rough surface engages the ball to assist in control of the latter.

The surface provides an enhanced frictional interaction with the ball so as to make it easier for a wearer to control the direction in which a ball is kicked or to apply a spin to the ball so as to curve the trajectory of the kicked ball.

The roughness of the surface can result from the surface being textured, but is preferably the result of indented or embossed formations on the surface. Preferably, the roughness of the surface is achieved by means of a multitude of embossed ribs arranged in a herringbone pattern. Alternatively the surface be provided with a multitude of linear indentations arranged in the same pattern.

Preferably, the zone is substantially in the centre of the top of the sleeve so that, in use, it overlies the laces of a boot on which the sleeve is fitted.

Preferably, the zone is one of three such zones, the other two zones flanking said zone.

Preferably, the sleeve includes fastening means for releaseably holding the tongue of the shoe.

It is currently fashionable for certain professional football boot players to fold down the tops of the tongues of their football boots. Players wishing to emulate this trait can more easily secure the tongue in the folded down position using the cover.

Preferably, the fastening means comprises a patch of filamentary hooks or eyes for engaging a complimentary material on the tongue to provide a touch and close fastening between the cover and the tongue.

Alternatively, the patch could be of filamentary headed protuberances.

The sleeve is preferably formed from a water impermeable material so as to prevent the ingress of water into the boot around the edges of the tongue.

Preferably, the sleeve is constituted by moulded latex, conveniently of approximately 1mm -1.5mm thickness.

The invention so lies in a sports shoe fitted with a cover as hereinabove described.

Brief description of the drawings

The invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 is a plan view of a cover in accordance with the invention the cover being for use with a child's football boot;

Figure 4 is an isometric view of the cover when fitted to a football boot.

Figure 5 shows the boot with its tongue folded down onto the covering;

Figure 6 and 7 are views, respectively corresponding to figures 1 and 2, of a cover for use with an adult's boot.

Detailed Description

With reference to Figures 1 and 2, a cover for a football boot comprises a sleeve 1 formed of a single piece of latex material of a thickness of approximately 1.0mm-1.5mm. The ~~sleeve has a rear opening 2 and forward opening 4 formed at the periphery of the~~ underside 5 and the top portion 6 of the cover. In use, the top portion 6 extends over the top and round the sides of the shoe as far as the sole, whilst the underside 5 extends across the mid region of the shoe's sole. As can be seen from figure 2, the sleeve is tapered from top to bottom so that the mid part of the cover 6 (referenced 8) is longer, in the axial direction of the sleeve, than the underside 5.

Cover 6 includes a central zone 10 comprising an array of ribs (for example rib 12) arranged in a raised herringbone pattern. Each rib projects a small distance from the underlying surface of the cover 6. The ribs are resiliently compressible, and as a result enable the cover to exert a high degree of frictional force on a ball in contact with the zone 10.

The zone 10 is flanked by two similarly ribbed side zones 14 and 16.. The ribs for all of the zones are formed in the same manner, for example, in the process of moulding the latex sleeve or by the subsequent etching or shot blasting of that surface.

A patch of fastening material 20 is attached to the top portion 6 of the cover at a central position (relative to the sleeve's circumference) and close to the opening 2. The material takes a form of a multitude of filamentary hooks which can matingly engage the material of the inside of a tongue of a football boot on which the sleeve is fitted. The material 20 therefore provides one half of a touch and close fastening with the tongue. The material for the patch 20 may, for example, be VELCRO™

The sleeve shown in figures 5-7 is identical to the sleeve of figure 1-3 in all respects, other than its size (as indicated on the drawings). Consequently, each of the referenced features of the sleeve of figures 6 and 7 is denoted by the reference numeral used for the corresponding feature in the sleeve of figure 5 1-2

Both types of sleeves are intended for use with a football boot, such as a boot 58 shown in figures 4 and 5. The boot 58 has a toe portion on which a number of studs 60 are provided and a heel portion on which further studs, eg 62, are mounted. In order to fit the sleeve while on the boot 58, the sleeve 1 is stretched so that the toe of the boot 58 can be passed in through the opening 5, through the sleeve, to project out of the opening 4 as shown in figures 4 and 5. It will be appreciated that the sleeve needs to be manually stretched in order for it to be able to clear the studs 60. When the sleeve is positioned as shown in figures 4 and 5, the underside 5 extends across the central portion of the sole in a region in which no studs are provided. Releasing the sleeve 1 when it is at this position causes the elastic material of the sleeve to contract so that the sleeve fits snugly around the boot 58 with the top portion extending across the laces and down either side of the boot upper.

The boot has a tongue 66 which has a fabric upper covering 68. The tongue can be folded down, as shown in figure 5, to bring the fabric into contact with the material 20, which releasably holds the tongue in the folded down position shown in Figure 5.

Fig 1

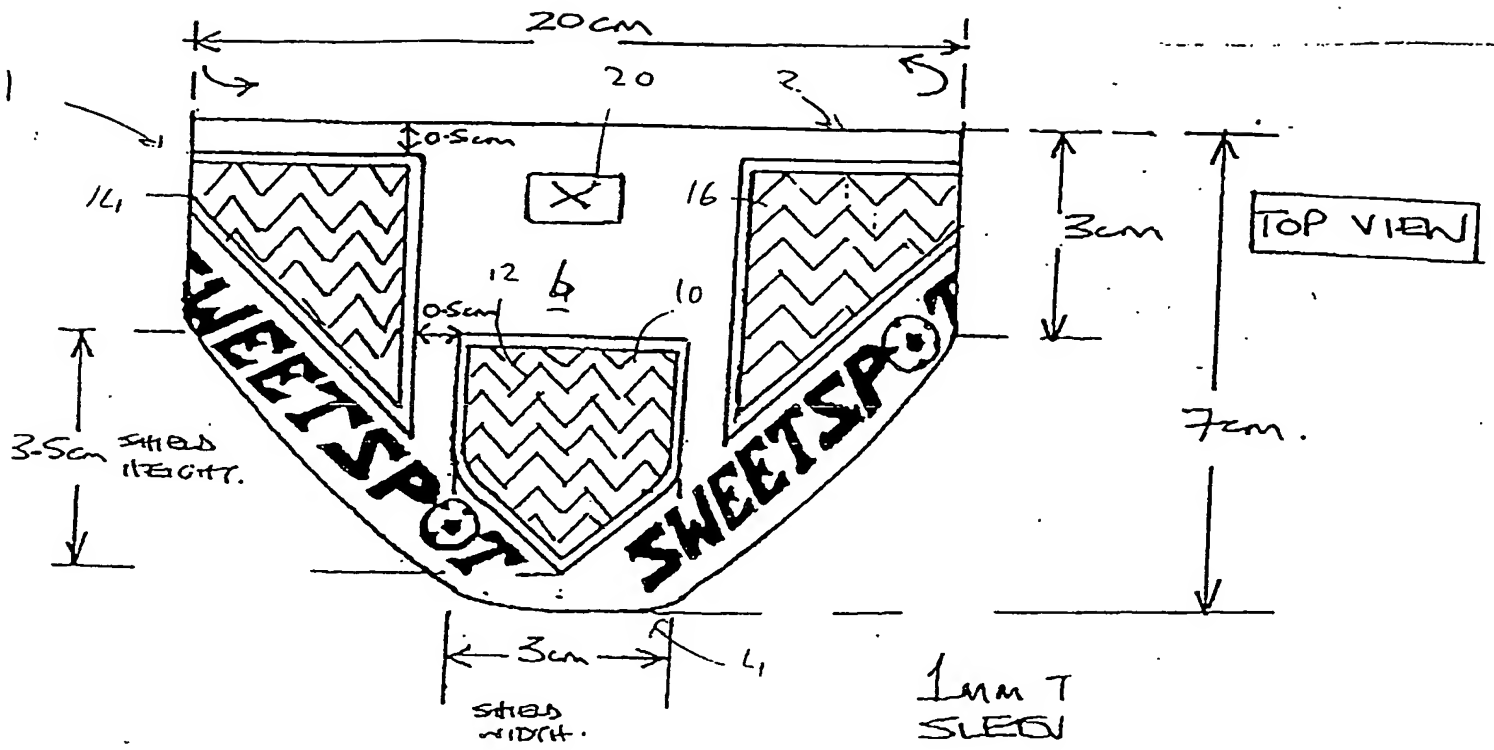


Fig 2

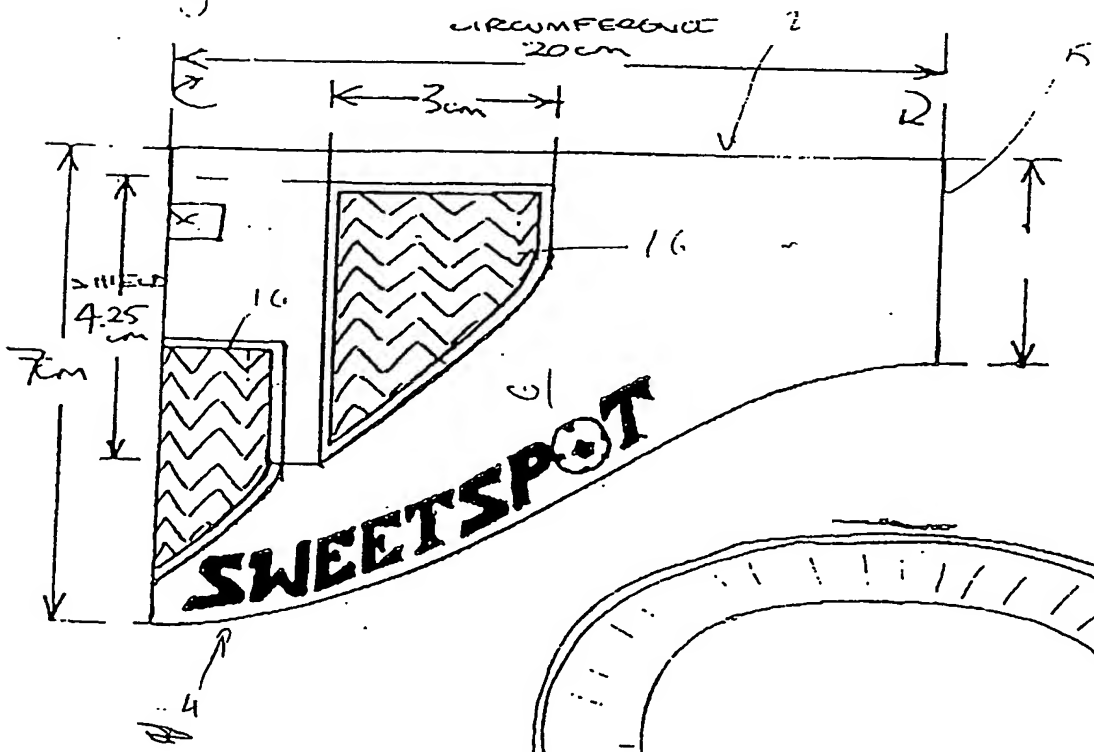
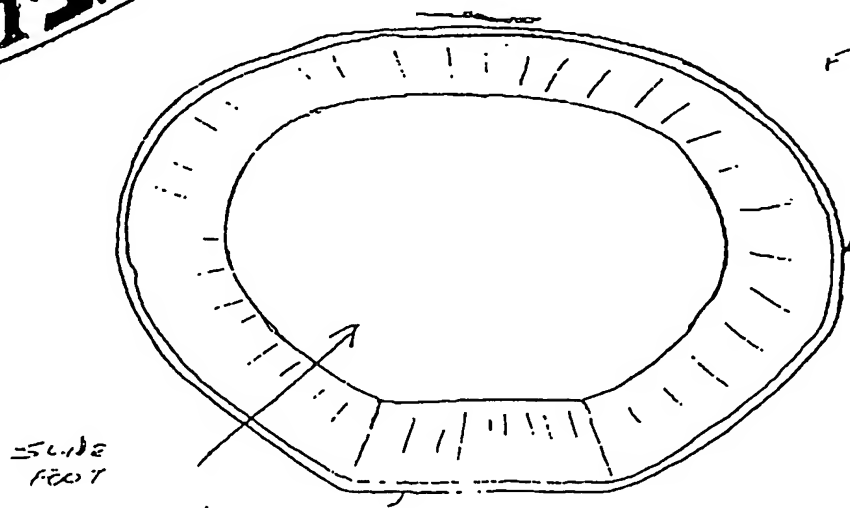


Fig 3



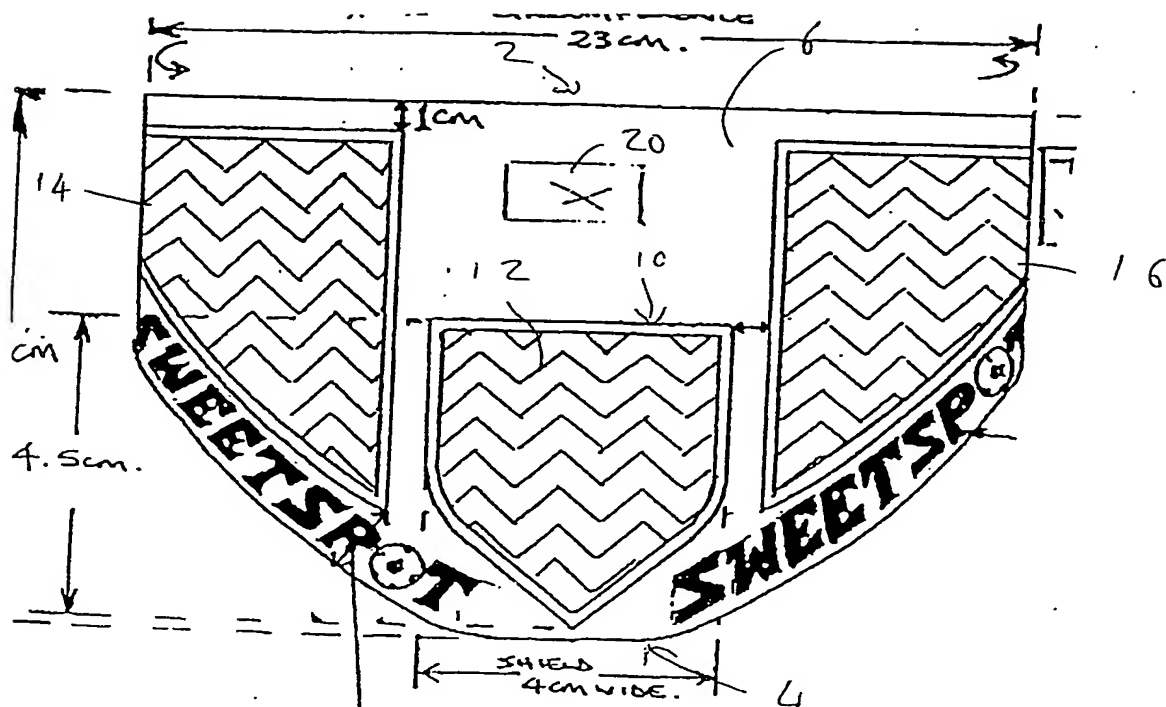


Fig 6

DISTANCE FROM BOTTOM OF ENGRAVED HERRINGBONE EFFECT SHIELD TO BOTTOM OF WIT. = 1.5 cm.

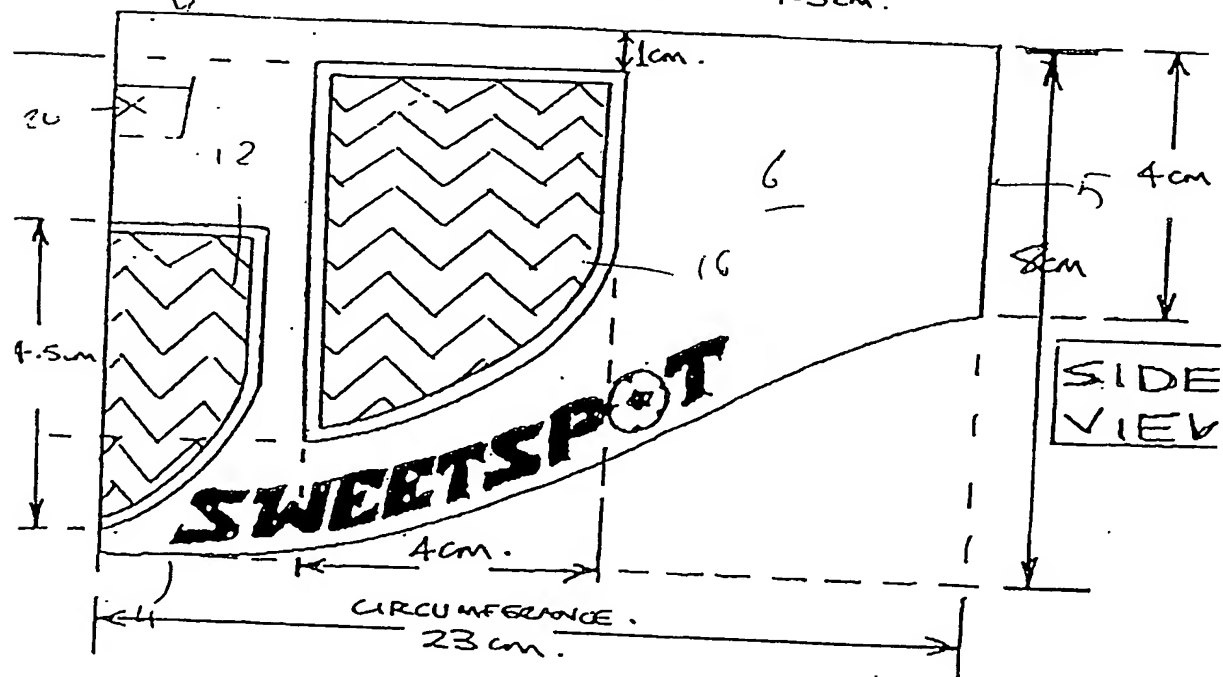


Fig 7

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